Fees from applicants seeking information under RTI Act

2538. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some senior officers of Delhi Police have reportedly asked for "fees" amounting Rs. 50,000/- from applicants seeking information under the Right to Information Act;

(b) whether any reasons for demanding such a huge fee has been given by concerned Police Officers;

(c) whether Government has so far enquired or taken any action against officers who are involved in this "illegal demand" and;

(d) whether Government proposes to provide more teeth to RTI Act in order to avoid such cases in future including scraping of fees, if necessary?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI RADHIKA V. SELVI): (a) In seven cases, Delhi Police has asked the applicants seeking Information under Rights to Information Act, the fees above Rs. 50,000/- in accordance with provision of section 7(3) of the RTI Act.

(b) The calculation, on the basis of which the demanded amount was arrived at, was informed to the applicants.

(c) The Central Information Commission in a decision dated 15.10.2007 in the case of Shri S.P. Goyal Vs. Commissioner of Income Tax held that Section 7(3) of the RTI Act enjoins a public authority to charge an information seeker both, the fee, which is Rs. 2/- per page and 'further fee' towards the cost of providing the information.

(d) There is no proposal to amend the RTI Act or the Right to Information (Regulation of Fee and Cost) rules, 2005 for scrapping of fees.

ULFA establishments in Bangladesh

2539. DR. K. MALAISAMY:
SHRI S. ANBALAGAN:
Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ULFA Commanders had been well established in Bangladesh with a vast network including seven hotels and six nursing homes;

(b) whether it is also a fact that ULFA are getting arms and ammunition *via* port city Cox Bazar;

(c) if so, the measures taken or being taken to curb the activities of these elements;

(d) whether there has been any positive effect consequent on the visit of our Minister for External Affairs to Bangladesh; and

(e) what is the stage of fence Construction of Meghalaya borders and has it ever been halted for political reasons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI RADHIKA V. SELVI): (a) and (b) There are reports to suggest that United Liberation Front

of Asom (ULFA) leaders are carrying out business activities in Bangladesh. Inputs also suggest that ULFA has been using the territory of Bangladesh to procure and smuggle arms/ explosives into India.

(c) and (d) The Government has regularly taken up, with Government of Bangladesh, India's security concerns including activities of Indian insurgent Groups (IIGs) and smuggling or arms through Bangladesh territory. The Government of Bangladesh has consistently maintained and assured that its territory will not be allowed to be used for activities inimical to India. The matter continues to be regularly taken up with Bangladesh during bilateral talks and interaction at various levels. However, information about the specific action taken by the Bangladesh authorities is not available.

Besides, the Government has taken up various measures to control cross-border terrorism, which *inter-alia* include strengthening of Border Security Force and equipping them with modern and sophisticated/gazettes; reduction in gaps between Border Outposts; intensification of patrolling and a comprehensive programme of construction of border roads and border fencing/flood lights, etc. Security Forces have been continuing sustained Counter Insurgency (CI) Operations against the militant outfit in Assam. Due to sustained CI operations 759 cadres of various militant outfits including ULFA were arrested/killed/surrendered in the State of Assam in the year, 2007. In the current year (upto 31.3.2008), 293 cadres of various militant outfits have been neutralized.

(e) Out of sanctioned 399.06 km of border fence in Meghalaya sector, 378.25 km has already been completed. The work on the remaining fence has been held up since March, 2007 due to some issues raised by the Government of Meghalaya. Efforts are being made on a regular basis to expedite the completion of fencing.

Report on attack on Churches in Orissa

2540. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government has received a report from National Commission on Minorities on the recent attacks on Churches in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the reasons for the attack was quota politics; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has submitted a report after visiting Orissa from 6th to 8th January, 2008 in which it has held that several factors were at work and converged together to create tension and violence which started on 24th December, 2007 and continued until 27th December, 2007. The NCM has held, *inter-alia*, the following responsible for the violence in Orissa.

(i) The long simmering Kondh-Pana conflict was in part responsible for the agitation and violence. A section of Panas who are Christians, have been seeking inclusion in the ST category, which would entitle them to the benefits of reservation. However,